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ان الدین عند اللہ الاسلام

The Review of Religions

Edited by GHULAM FARID MALIK, M. A.

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CONTENTS

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Pages

HUMANITY'S GREATEST BENEFACTOR—MUHAMMAD ... 391

IS THE GOSPEL TEXT TAMPERED WITH?
—By a Christian Student of the Gospels ... 406

THE HOLY PROPHET AND POLYGAMY
—By Sufi M. R. Bengalee, M. A., Muslim Missionary in America ... 412

THE NEED FOR RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TRAINING
—By Mr. A. M. RAO ... 416

BOOK REVIEWS ... 420

NOTES AND COMMENTS ... 422

Gandhi's Fast—Is Religion Indispensable?—Secret of the Strength of Islam—Education of the Child.

NOTES ON THE HOLY QURAN ... 431

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent and the most Merciful
We praise Him and invoke His blessings upon
His exalted Prophet.

" A prophet came unto the world and the world accepted him not, but God shall accept him and establish his truth with mighty signs."

HUMANITY'S GREATEST BENEFACTOR—MUHAMMAD

IV

[Under this heading we dwelt, at great length, on the sacrifices of the Holy Prophet in the July and August numbers of the "Review of Religions". But our subject will remain incomplete if we failed to deal as fully and thoroughly with the sanctity and purity of his life and with his kind and benevolent acts. An effort had been made to throw some light on the Prophet's most immaculate and spotless character in the last number of this *Review*. The present article is a continuation of the article in the September number.—*Ed.*]

The Prophet's Sanctity

It may be said that because the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of God be upon him !) was a great and influential man, people were afraid to say anything against him. We, therefore, cite the testimonies of honest and upright persons given about him after his death.

No better evidence can be given about that period than that of Ayesha, one of his nine wives who survived him. Occasions of complaint can arise and do generally arise against a husband who has only two wives.

But the Holy Prophet had nine. He had become old and these wives, some of whom were quite young, were not even provided with sufficient daily food. But when some one asked Ayesha about the Prophet's morals, she said, "He was the embodiment of all moral virtues described in the Qur'ān."

Such was Ayesha's love for her husband and Master that once she was seen eating wheaten bread while tears were dropping down her cheeks. On being asked the cause of her grief, she replied. "The Prophet of God died and he never ate white bread. Now that I am eating it, it sticks in my throat. Had the Holy Prophet now been living, I would have prepared it for him."

Ease and comfort generally make people forget even his dearest friends and relatives but Ayesha who became a widow in the prime of her youth and who remained throughout that part of her life which she spent with the Holy Prophet a complete stranger to wordly pleasures and comforts was so deeply impressed with the beauty and sublimity of the Holy Prophet's character and of his moral virtues that even after his death whenever she ate some nice and tasty food, she wished that the Holy Prophet had been alive and had also partaken of that food.

Testimony of his Successors

The testimony in favour of the Prophet of his successors is as reliable as that of his wives and we quote it as well. It generally happens that when a person succeeds another, if no moral or spiritual ties bind him to his predecessor he tries to depreciate and disparage his work and in this way seeks to establish his own importance and superiority. The Prophet's case was evidently quite an exception to this general practice.

When in the time of Abu Bakr the Prophet's first successor, all Arabia rose in revolt and the Arabs refused to pay taxes and the situation grew to be very dangerous Abu Bakr was strongly advised by the prominent companions of the Prophet to call

back the army, which the Prophet had despatched before his death towards the Syrian frontier, to help him to quell the rebellion. Abu Bakr regarded his Master and all that he had done with such deep veneration that on being tendered this apparently very sane advice he exclaimed in his own inimitable manner, "It is beyond the power of Abu Quhafa's son (Abu Quhafa was the sobriquet by which Abu Bakr's father was generally known) to stop the army sent by the Prophet of God from proceeding to the place which the Prophet had fixed for it. By God, even if the enemy should capture Medina, murder our women and children and the beasts and birds of prey should feast on their dead bodies, I will not stop the army despatched by the Prophet from proceeding to its goal."

It may be said and quite reasonably that this incident alone does not establish the truth of the Prophet's claims. It may or may not establish the truth of his claims but it does most certainly prove that Muhammad was a most truthful and righteous man whose words were respected in an extraordinary degree by his disciples and companions even after his death. The second evidence in this connection is that of his second successor given at the latter's deathbed. When Omar felt that he would live no more he desired that he should be buried at the feet of his Master. He sent his son to Ayesha requesting her to allow him to be buried in her apartment by the side of the Holy Prophet. Omar was a man whose reign has been considered one of the best periods in all human history even by some Christian historians. These historians vilify and abuse the Holy Prophet, but they admire and appreciate the work of Omar. Could such a man, whose administrative abilities, diplomatic skill and foresight, whose sagacity and shrewdness have been generously acknowledged by western writers and who had lived day and night with the Prophet, desire to be buried at the latter's feet if, during his long and uninterrupted intimate companionship with him, he had came to know of a single act of the Prophet which was not inspired by a desire to serve humanity or seek the pleasure of God.

Omar's testimony is reinforced by the evidence of the Prophet's third Caliph. Usman's testimony shows the high esteem in which the Prophet was held by him. A fierce rebellion broke out in Usman's time and the rebels plotted even against his life. Knowing of the insurgents' evil designs Mo'āvia, the Governor of Syria and a very near relative of Usman, approached him with a proposal to the effect that as the rebels were contriving to kill him and make one of the Prophet's companions the Head of the Muslim State in his place he should send the most respected and prominent among them to the distant provinces of the Empire. But so great was Usman's regard for the Prophet that at a time when the whole country was seething with revolt and his own life was evidently in danger, the only reply that Mo'āvia's advice elicited from him was, "How can I scatter those whom the Massenger of God had brought together." Usman sacrificed his own life but could not be prevailed upon to send out of Medina those whom his Master, the Holy Prophet, had gathered round him. Could feelings of such deep affection and veneration be created in the heart of a man who during a long intimacy with the Prophet had seen even a single act of deceit or dishonesty on his part?

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Ali was the Prophet's nearest relative and his whole life can be cited as a testimony to the truthfulness and honesty of the Holy Prophet. We therefore do not deem it necessary to describe any particular incident from his life.

A Sane Inference

One thing is very necessary to observe in relation to these evidences. It is this that the evidence about the character of a person of those persons alone carries any weight whose opportunities to enjoy his companionship have been close and long continued. Keeping this test in view in forming an estimate about the character of the Prophet, we have cited the evidence of his wife which shows that his morals were noble and sublime to an extraordinary degree. The testimony of his

friends and disciples is equally strong in his favour and the evidence of persons of different stations in life the nature of whose relations with the Prophet was also quite different from each other has also been adduced. All of them have unanimously testified to the Prophet's most immaculate and taintless character. Is it then compatible with fairness and equity that the testimony of those who saw the Prophet, lived with him, either as friends or as enemies, should be rejected as partial and unreliable and the evidence of those people who came ages afterwards should be accepted as Holy Writ? An eye witness is the most reliable and trustworthy of all sorts of witnesses and those who witnessed the doings of the Prophet whether his friends or his foes, all bear testimony to the nobility and sublimity of his moral character. How can, then, those who came centuries after him, with justice and equity, find fault with it.

Prophet's Jealousy for his Creator

The second incontestible proof of the sanctity of the Prophet's life was the jealousy which he entertained about his Creator. A well-known historical incident throws light on this aspect of the Prophet's life. Many Muslims were wounded in the battle of Ohud and the Prophet himself sustained such severe injuries that his enemies thought that he was killed. Believing that the Prophet was dead, one of the Meccan chiefs cried aloud in the field of battle, "where is Muhammad who claimed to be the Prophet of God." The Prophet asked those around him to keep silent. Having received no reply to his challenge, he exclaimed, "we have killed Muhammad, but where is Abu Bakr?" The Holy Prophet again enjoined silence. Seeing that no answer came from the Muslims' side, he cried aloud, "Abu Bakr is killed too, and where is Omar?" Upon this Omar was about to speak in his usually excited manner when the Holy Prophet bade him not to say anything." When repeated challenges of the Meccan chief went unaccepted and silence seemed to reign over the Muslim camp, he cried at the top of his voice, "Glory be to Hubal! Glory be to Hubal!" Hearing this the Holy Prophet who himself had enjoined silence upon his companions as the

situation demanded such silence on the part of the Muslims because they were wounded in very large numbers and there was the fear of the repitition of the attack by the Meccan army, now said, " why don't you say, ' God alone is worthy to be exalted and glorified, God alone is worthy to be exalted and glorified '." See the same man who a short while ago had strictly ordered his companions not to say anything in answer to the repeated challenges of the Meccan chief, realizing that to keep silent when the idols and images were being extoled and glorified would compromise God's Oneness and His Unity commanded them to answer while speaking at that critical moment was to invite enemy's attack and was equal to courting sure disaster and destruction. He could not bear to see the name of God being held in disgrace.

Fruits of the Prophet's Labours

The third proof of the Prophet's sanctity and holiness are the great results which his teaching and his own personal example produced and continue to produce to this day. It would suffice to cite the names of Abu Bakr, Omar, Usman and Ali in this connection. Even those prejudiced Christian writers who brush aside all ideas of fairness aud justice while dealing with the Prophet and feel no compunction in levelling most filthy though absolutely unfounded charges at him, have admitted that Abu Bakr and Omar were great and good. They have to acknowledge the greatness and goodness of these too very distinguished disciples of the Prophet because of the sacrifices they made in the service of Humanity and in helping the cause of Truth. It is surpassingly strange that the nobility and honesty of Abu Bakr and Omar are acknowledged but the righteousness and sanctity of that greatest son of man to whose ennobling example and association all that was good in Abu Bakr and Omar was due, are denied recognition. Is it possible that a cheat and a libertine, as the Prophet has been regarded by his enemies, could have produced such models of truthfulness, righteousness and honesty as Abu Bakr and Omar evidently were? How could a person who was

always on the look-out to forcibly seize other peoples' property produce men who squandered, as it were, their dearly earned possessions at his bidding in the way of God ? Evil comes out of evil. Cheats can produce cheats only. Imposters and libertines cannot produce nice men and fine characters. How could it be, then, that these people whose honesty, righteousness selflessness, simplicity and patriotism are generally admitted, should have exhibited such beautiful traits of an irreproachable moral character if the person whose company and training produced them was not himself the embodiment of these virtues. These gentlemen themselves confessed that the high moral qualities for which they were admired and respected were only a few drops from the limitless ocean of righteousness and piety which the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) caused to flow.

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Usman's was a blameless and beautiful character though on account of some historical errors he is not properly understood. But Ali's godliness and piety, his selflessness and saintliness are generally acknowledged ; and he was not only the Prophet's fourth successor but like his son was educated and brought up by him and lived with him in his house and was married to his daughter. How could Ali, we ask in all humility, living under the Prophet's care and training, develop these qualities if the charges and accusations that are hurled at the Holy Prophet are admitted to be true ? If these virtues should be considered to have been acquired by Ali independently of the Prophet or should be regarded to have been rooted in his nature, then the question is, how could Ali remain so steadfastly loyal, and sincere to the Prophet who himself was quite devoid of all these qualities. Morever this sincerity and devotion to the Holy Prophet was not confined to his four Caliphs. He transformed a whole nation sunk into the lowest depths of moral and spiritual degradation into models of justice, equity and fairness so much so that when in the reign of Omar, compelled by some political considerations, the Muslims decided to quit Syria, not only the Jews but the Christians of Syria also sent a deputation to them,

requesting them earnestly to stay in their country as they said, they preferred their Government over the rule of their own co-religionists because their honours, properties and possessions were more secure in the hands of the Muslims than in those of the Christians.

Is it not pertinent to ask the traducers of the Holy Prophet that if Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not sanctity and godliness incarnate and if he was not blessed to an unusual extent with the power to sanctity and reform others, how could he work such a remarkable transformation in the lives of the uncivilized and marauding Arabs who took an unseemly pride in drinking and gambling and how could the desert and sandy land of Arabia become a place of which the angels of heavens could well be proud ?

Some Charges Refuted

Some charges are brought forward against the sanctity of the Prophet and it seems necessary at this occasion to refute three of them which are considered to be most weighty and important. Sir William Muir writes that Muhammad did certainly introduce some wholesome reforms but he is responsible for the introduction of three practices which have done more harm to the human society than the good done by his reforms. His teaching about Divorce, Polygamy and Slavery is the target of the enemies' shafts.

We need not say anything to defend and justify the system of divorce introduced by Islam because instead of being fiercely assailed as it used to be by the West not long ago, it has been introduced nearly in all countries and communities and human society generally now considers it inhuman not to allow divorce when circumstances demand it, and America has even exceeded the limits prescribed by Islam on this point.

As regards polygamy, to marry more than one wife is in itself not an objectionable practice. What makes it such is to indulge

too much in it or to be unduly attracted by, and take a fancy to, a certain class of women.

Accessories of Licentiousness

Licentiousness implies certain things. A licentious man is necessarily a heavy drunkard, he is fond of dainty and tasty dishes, he lives in luxury, loves music and unmarried girls, seeks younger and more beautiful women than his already wedded wives, is anxious to satisfy female desires and demands, does not deal equitably with all his wives and spends most of his time in the company of women.

These are the sure signs of a lascivious person. He must necessarily drink to excess because drinking drives away all cares and anxieties and lewdness cannot go together. Drinking brings on him a state of self-forgetfulness. A lustful man is fond of tasty and relishable food to increase his lust. He provides for himself all sorts of comforts and physical conveniences as they give rise to ideas of lust. He wants music to strengthen his lustful ideas and a libertine is madly fond of virgin girls. You will not see a lewd person who would prefer married women over virgin girls and out of virgins he would always select comparatively young girls because he wants gaiety, marry-making and frolicing and only young girls can provide these things. He does not like widows or divorced women fearing lest lacking in manly qualities as compared with their former husbands he might fail to win their affections and might be disgraced in their eyes. He shuns such trial. He is always in search of young beautiful damsels. He keeps his wives happy and pleased with him by fulfilling all their wants so that they should love him all the more. He is not equally just towards all his wives. Sometimes he is more inclined towards one, then towards another, then towards a third and above all he spends most of his time in the company of young women without which his sexual appetite is not fully satisfied. These are nine things which all of them, or some of them, must

necessarily be found in a lascivious person. Let us see if these things were found in the Holy Prophet also.

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Wine

Take, for instance, drinking. Of all reformers Muhammad, the Holy Prophet, is alone responsible for the total prohibition of the use of alcohol in any shape or form or to any amount. Religious Reformers before Islam had endeavoured to set limits to the use of wine, and efforts were also made in all faiths to restrict its use, but Islam alone succeeded in totally forbidding it. If the Holy Prophet had been a licentious man, he should have, instead of discouraging or restricting the use of wine, encouraged it but he did to the contrary. It cannot be said that he declared wine drinking to be unlawful so that people may not question his piety and righteousness because at the time when he forbade it, drinking was not considered in his own country, nor in any other part of the world, incompatible with the idea of holiness and piety. In his time the soothsayers of Arabia, the religious philosophers of Persia, the priests of Rome and the Pandits of India vied with each other in drinking wine and not only they did not consider it incompatible with godliness but on the contrary regarded it as an essential part of their devotions and prayers. In the face of an overwhelming public opinion in favour of using wine one could not even conceive of disallowing it at the time the Prophet appeared. If there could have been the slightest tinge of lasciviousness in his character, as his traducers seem to suggest, he would never have declared its use unlawful but instead in deference to public opinion and the popular habit which had become, as it were, a second nature with his people, he would have encouraged it.

It may be argued that the Prophet being a man free from all sorts of cares and anxieties did not require the use of wine. But this assertion is even more untenable and absurd than the one that he was a pleasure-loving man. His life was an unbroken record of hardships and privations bravely and patiently

borne, of consuming cares and concerns that were gnawing at his heart. From the time he laid claim to prophethood he had enemies all around him and he was the target of the attacks of one and all. People did not only find the desire of their hearts and the satisfaction of their minds in tormenting and persecuting him but considered it as actually deserving of the highest divine reward. Not only the inhabitants of Mecca and the pagans of Arabia, but the Jews and the Christians alike regarded him and his teachings a great danger to their faiths and their social order. Every one raised his sword at him, all tongues were busy reviling him and all eyes casting threatening looks at him. He was not allowed to live in peace even after the fall of Mecca. The Byzantine Empire was contriving plans to bring about his fall. The Persian government was hatching plots to compass his death and his internal enemies had redoubled their secret activities to harm him. In short no pains were spared to render his life a veritable hell for him. He had become a complete stranger to peace and comfort. Only a few days before his death he was compelled to despatch an army against a powerful army which was about to swoop down upon Medina. These incessant and long continued afflictions and distresses were enough to drive a man mad but the Prophet bravely and courageously endured them. So if not for the gratification of animal appetites but in order to drive away his distressful cares he could have allowed the use of wine. But he did not do so. How could it, then, be said with justice and propriety that he forbade drinking because he had no anxieties and no cares.

Delicious and Dainty Dishes

Again licentious people are very fond of savoury and invigorating food that increases their lust. But on the day when the Holy Prophet (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) died the people of his household were actually starving. Many times he had to fasten slabs of stone with his belly on account of excessive hunger. He spent his whole income to meet the wants of the Muslims. His wife Ayesha says, " scores of time

we went absolutely without food, many times we lived on dates and as may times only on water. Could a man who lived on such food be considered as a licentious and lustful man?

Beautiful Furniture

Again a licentious person provides all sorts of furniture and ornature to add to his sensual appetite. But all the furniture in some of the Holy Prophet's houses consisted of merely a lamb's skin which was used as bed for both himself and his wife. We again quote Ayesha. She says, "We had only one bed in our house on which we slept together and when the Prophet (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) rose for his night-prayer, he would say it in the same bed and I had to contract may legs to make room for him.

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Virgin Girls

Moreover a person given to the gratification of his carnal desires wishes to marry virgin girls. But the Holy Prophet did not marry a virgin girl even when he was virtually the Head of a powerful State. In Mecca when he was in the most straintened circumstances he married Ayesha, a virgin. But after he had become the ruler of the whole of Arabia, and the exigencies of circumstances compelled him to contract plural marriages, he did not marry any virgin girl. If he was at all what his traducers depict him to be, would he not have married young unmarried girls? But he did not, even though some virgins actually offered him their hands in marriage. Again a libertine given to the persuit of sensual pleasures and the gratification of bestial passions is always after beautiful women. When he weds, he weds for the sake of beauty. But all his friends and those who disparage him admit Ayesha to be his most beloved wife. If he were a lascivious debauchee (God forbid the thought) his subsequent marriages would certainly have been with women younger in years and more handsome in appearance than Ayesha. But even Irving, who is one of the most vitriolic of the Prophet's enemies has to admit that, "Upon this wife thus chosen in the very blossom of years, the Prophet

doted more than upon any of those when he subsequently married." This is the evidence of one of his most implacable antagonists. If he had been a man of loose character, he should have sought more beautiful and younger girls than Ayesha. On the contrary he married women who were more advanced in years than Ayesha and could stand no comparison with her in the beauty of her face. And he married Ayesha not for the handsomeness of her looks, but for the sincerity, the steadfast loyalty and invincible faith of her father, Abu Bakr. Could this be called licentiousness ? If licentious persons are made of such stuff, then chastity and saintliness of character are meaningless words.

Musical instruments are another necessity for a licentious person. But the Prophet (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) forbade their use as a satanic contrivance. Persons of good moral character do sometimes like music, but you will never find a sensual man who is not very fond of it. But the Prophet discouraged music to the point of prohibition. Could this be expected of a voluptuous libertine ?

Again a licentious person cannot afford to ignore the wishes of his wives. But it was not so with our Prophet (peace and the blessings of God be upon him). When at the fall of Khaibar money flowed into the Government coffers in the form of taxes and the Muslims grew rich, the Prophet's wives who were ladies of high and noble families, comparing their own straitened conditions with the comforts and facilities that were at the disposal of the wives of other Muslims, were prompted, quite naturally and justifiably, to request the Prophet (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) to provide for them also a little more comfort in life, as the conquests made by Islam had brought plenty of riches in their wake and all the Muslims had shared them. The reply that this quite natural request elicited from the Holy Prophet and which has been given in the Quārn was :—"O Prophet ! say to your wives ; if you desire this world's life and its ornature, then come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a goodly departing. And

if you desire Allah and His Apostle and the latter abode, then surely Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a mighty reward." (32 : 28)

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The substance of the Holy Prophet's reply to his wives was this that they could not possibly hope to get riches during his life-time, and if they wanted to be in affluent circumstances they should better seek separation from him as his high responsibilities as a religious Reformer and a comfortable life could not go together. But if they bore the hardships of life with him patiently and courageously and would serve the cause of Islam as he did, they would get plenty of riches and munificence after his death. The Holy Prophet's wives did, in fact, get wealth in abundance but not till the Prophet had gone the way of all flesh. Could there be found in the world a licentious man who would reject and spurn the request of his wives for wordly riches and personal embellishment and would advise them to get divorce from him and seek the delight of their hearts somewhere else ?

Moreover a person of this description never deals equitably with all his wives. He is unjustly favourably inclined towards one who is most beautiful and neglects the others. But so great was the sense of fairness and justice in our Prophet that even in his last illness he scrupulously kept the turns of his wives even though he had to daily change the different apartments of his wives supported by others as he had grown very weak. He kept on doing this till only three days before his death when Fatima seeing the great hardship which he was put to on this account wept and his wives seeing his increasing weakness willingly allowed him not to disturb his rest by moving from one apartment to another. Could a person who exhibited such a scrupulous regard for fairness and equity in his dealings with his wives possibly be a libertine ?

Again a lascivious person spends most of his time in the company of women. But the Prophet spent his whole day outside with his companions and when at night he would go

in the privacy of his harem he would, after taking his meals, go straight to bed and at dead of night would rise up for his night prayer. How could a man whose whole time was so minutely divided get time to indulge in licentiousness ? The fact alone that he married several women does not at all show that he actually was, as he is wrongly sometimes considered to be, a sensual person. We should see the objects that these marriages were intended to serve. We should see whether these marriages were for God's sake or for the gratification of his so-called carnal desires and low passions ? If they were for the sake of and in obedience to the commandment of God, then he cannot be called licentious. And we have proved beyond dispute or contradiction that these marriages were not contracted for the gratification of his sensual appetites, as he never sought to gratify them. They served another and a very high and noble purpose. And that was that he was raised among a people whose men and women were complete strangers to divine commandments. He had to teach these commandments to his people and to make them act upon them as well. He married women belonging to various families so that learning from him that part of religion which pertained to the fair sex, they should teach it to the members of their sex. This was indeed a very noble and a godly object and the Prophet by marrying so many wives and by dealing with all of them equitably and justly, in fact, had imposed upon himself a perpetual hardship which he continued to bear gladly till the call came from his Master to quit this earthly perishable tabernacle.

Now that we have proved that the attitude of the Prophet towards his wives was not the attitude of a licentious man, it can quite easily be understood that his permission to marry more than one wife to those of his followers who are or may be similarly situated does not constitute any inexplicable and unaccountable injustice, as is sometimes wrongly suggested, to womankind. On the other hand in this very wholesome institution was laid the basis of the temporal welfare of the Muslim community and its moral and social uplift.

IS THE GOSPEL TEXT TAMPERED WITH?

(BY A CHRISTIAN STUDENT OF THE GOSPELS)

The first thought of the average Christian is that no one would dare to add to, or alter, the sacred gospel records.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the narratives of the Saviour's life, which we now regard as scripture, and venerate as sacred and not to be tampered with, would not be regarded in any sense as " the scriptures " by Christian people at the time they were written, nor for many, many years afterwards. They were looked upon as mere ordinary non-sacred writings about the life of Jesus, which anyone felt entitled to add to, or explain.

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The *Old* Testament formed the only sacred scriptures recognized by the early Christian Church ; and a sharp distinction would be drawn between those old sacred writings and the various accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus.

We *now* recognize the greater value of the Gospels ; but it was quite the opposite in the early years of the Christian Church.

The Old Testament, and the Old Testament only, was held to be sacred, and venerated as scripture.

By the time of the Christian era, no Jew would have dared to add to, or alter, the *Old* Testament scripture. Jews of a much earlier period had not hesitated to do so : that is, before those ancient writings had acquired, by time, their exclusively sacred character. But by the time of Christ they had become sacred, fixed, inviolate.

The writings about the life of Jesus were on a different footing, and no one felt any scruple in altering or adding to them.

There were many of these accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus, as we know from the first verse of St. Luke's gospel; and no distinction had *then* been drawn between them. To the early Christians they were *all* of the non-sacred class although in time it was recognized that some of the accounts were of much more value than others.

Now, bearing in mind that *none* of the written accounts of the life of Jesus were regarded as "scripture" by the early Christians, it will be easily understood that any copyist or editor felt quite free to alter or add to them. If he thought a little explanation was necessary, he added it without hesitation, thinking that he was doing something *helpful* rather than harmful. There would also be a natural tendency to bring the writings, here and there, into line with the thought and teaching that prevailed in the editor's own time.

Thus, comments and additions, fancied improvements and elaborations became incorporated with the original text; and to what extent this was done no one really knows.

The ideas of the man who added to the text might be right or wrong. They might embody the *later* thought of the man's own time *rather than the thought of the Lord Jesus.* But to the man who wrote them, the additions and explanations seemed perfectly right and natural. And as he himself felt sure that they *were* right, he naturally thought that they would embody the views of the Lord Jesus. Hence he did not hesitate to *attribute them to Jesus,* however wrong he may have been, in some instances, in doing so.

Let us look at two striking examples. St. John v. 2—4:

> "Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered."

Then, at a later period, the Interpolator comes along and

thinks he can insert a useful explanation, so he adds the following passage :—

> "Waiting for moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water. Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."

To the well-meaning, but ignorant, Interpolator, the natural explanation of this intermittent mineral spring was that an *Angel* was specially sent down periodically to "trouble" that water. This was the explanation that appealed to him, and he inserted it for the benefit of others. He thought that he was giving an *accurate* and *useful* comment, although he was entirely wrong.

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Scholars are agreed that this passage is a later insertion, made by some scribe or editor ; and it will be noticed that it is omitted from the Revised Version.

It strikingly shows, however, how easy it was for additional and erroneous clauses and ideas to become incorporated with the text.

As a further example of this tendency, consider the last 12 verses of St. Mark's gospel, *i.e.*, St. Mark xvi. 9—20.

St. Mark's gospel really ends at verse 8 of chapter xvi, in an unfinished sentence. Dr. Moffatt makes this quite clear in his translation. Verse 8 reads thus :—

> "And they fled out of the tomb, for they were seized with terror, and beside themselves. They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid of"——

Thus, very abruptly, the gospel of St. Mark ends in a broken sentence, without saying exactly what they were afraid of.

The last 12 verses in our Authorized Version, *i.e.*, verses 9 to 20, were added by a later writer. Dr. Moffatt states that they were a *second century* attempt to complete the gospel.

Unfortunately there is nothing in the A. V. to show that these 12 verses were not part of the original.

In v. 14 we are told by this scribe that the Lord Jesus

> "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart."

Then, not doubting that he knew the mind of Christ, he tells us in v. 16 that the Saviour said :—

> "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Then, imagining that the Lord Jesus would be sure to say something of the kind, he boldly tells us that the Saviour did say :—

> "And these signs shall follow them that believe : In my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Now it will not hurt to repeat that all this formed no part of the original gospel, but that it was added in the second century, more than 70 years (how much more we do not know) after the death of Christ.

The person who added this passage obviously drew upon his imagination for the words of the risen Saviour. Yet he does not hesitate to insert in the gospel *his own* words and ideas as being expressly the words and ideas of the *Lord Jesus Himself.*

In the two instances quoted, the *fact* of the insertion is clearly established ; and the *wrongness* of much of the interpolation is also clear.

It is not always as easy to establish these two conclusions. In some instances we can only judge by comparing doubtful or questionable statements with genuine or well-attested statements

in the gospels, both as regards the wording and the *spirit* of the statements.

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That these insertions and alterations in the original gospel-text were sometimes influenced by the Pauline teaching, is shown by St. Luke xxiv. 47. The best manuscripts read :—

> " and that repentance *unto* remission of sins should be preached in His name."
>
> (*i.e.*, " the preaching of repentance which is to lead on to forgiveness," as pointed out by Professor Adeney.)

Whereas less reliable manuscripts read :—

> " and that repentance *and* remission of sins should be preached in His name,"

which exemplifies the tendency to give a Pauline meaning to the passage.

In relation to this problem of Interpolations it may incidentally be pointed out that the very oldest manuscript copies of the New Testament that we possess are not earlier than the fourth century. All copies of older date than this (and the original documents themselves) have been lost.

Of course, after the great value of the Christian documents became recognized, they were copied with scrupulous care ; and departures from the copy that was being copied was accidental rather than intentional. But we are bound to take into consideration the period that intervened before the real value of the documents was appreciated by the Christian Church, and the alterations and additions that were made during that period.

Except in the manner indicated by the examples given above, it may perhaps be assumed that alterations and additions were not of a very serious character; but it is *an assumption*, and it is obviously impossible for anyone to say to what extent the fourth century copies of the New Testament, which are the earliest we possess (and of course all copies of

later date), differ from the original manuscripts from which the gospels were compiled.

The examples given above show, beyond all doubt, that the original text of the Gospels has been seriously interfered with. Editors and copyists, often with the very best intention, added remarks of their own which are likely to confuse and mislead the reader of the gospels. It is clear that in making these additions they did not hesitate to ascribe to the Lord Jesus phrases that embody their own ideas and the ideas of the times in which they lived, rather than the ideas of the Saviour Himself. They no doubt did this in all honesty, believing that the thoughts and ideas that influenced them were necessarily the thoughts and ideas of the Lord Jesus.

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THE HOLY PROPHET AND POLYGAMY

[By Sufi M. R. Bengalee, M.A., Muslim Missionary in America]

The so-called most damaging accusation brought against MUHAMMAD is that of polygamy. Mr Manly P. Hall, the erudite author of "Masonic Hermetic Qabbalistic and Roscrucian Symbolical Philosophy", says in his article, "The Faith of Islam":

> "Those who sincerely believe the harem to be irreconcilable with spirituality should, with consistency, move for the expurgation of the Psalm of David and the Proverbs of Solomon from the list of inspired writings, for the harem of Islam's Prophet was insignificant compared with that maintained by Israel's wisest King and reputed favourite of the most High."

The modernist seems to think that there is something unedifying and unethical in the institution of polygamy under all circumstances. The history of religion, however, reveals to us that most of the religious founders and teachers who were noblest patterns of humanity and were of pure and spotless character, practised polygamy, as is apparent from the above quotation. The present day Christians boldly come forward to impress upon the world that Christianity advocated monogamy. Close scrutiny and investigation throws a different light upon this subject. Jesus was a prophet who did not bring any new law, but came to fulfil the law of Moses. Jesus says :

> " Think not that I am come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Mathew V : 17, 18.)

> " The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat ; all, therefore, that they bid you observe ; that observe and do ; but do not ye after the words ; for they say, and do not." (Mathew XXIII : 9,3.)

> " This is the law and the Prophet." (Matthew VII : 12)

The above verses make it plain that Jesus did not establish any new law or dispensation. He regarded the law of Moses as still binding on the people.

There has not been said one word by Jesus against plural marriages in the whole New Testament. His silence conclusively proves his sanction of polygamy as it runs through the whole Jewish system. Furthermore, the Christians actually practised polygamy. The following passage from no less an authority than Westermard is very important :

> " In the middle of the sixth century Diarmiat, King of Ireland, had two queens and two concubines. Polygamy was frequently practised by Merovingian Kings. Charles the Great had two wives and many concubines ; and one of his laws seems to imply that polygamy was not unknown even among priests. In later times, Philip of Hesse and Fredrick William II of Prussia contracted bigamous marriages with the sanction of the Lutheran clergy. Luther himself approved of the bigamy of the former, and so did Melanchthon. On various occasions Luther speaks of polygamy with considerable toleration. It had not been forbidden by God ; even Abraham who was a 'perfect Christian' had two wives. It is true that God had allowed such marriages to certain men of the Old Testament only in particular circumstances, and if a Christian wanted to follow their example, he had to show that circumstances were similar in his case ; but polygamy was undoubtedly preferable to divorce. In 1650, soon after the peace of Westphalia, when the population was greatly reduced by the thirty years war, the Frankish Reichstag at Nuremberg passed the resolution that henceforth every man shall be allowed to marry two women (*Ibid* P. 558. nl.) Certain Christian sects had even advocated polygamy with much fervour."

In fact, unbiassed and thoughtful students of religion must come to the conclusion that polygamy is the only solution of certain social and ethical problems. I give one out of many such considerations which justify this institution. Suppose as a result of war in a certain country women largely out-number men ; the sex-impulse is so rash and strong that either you will have to sanction the practice of polygamy in order to save morality which is the back-bone of all religions, or you will have to allow free sex-life which is revolting to human nature. There

arise conditions in which polygamy may not only be ethically justifiable but becomes a necessity. Even in the United States of America where the preaching and practise of polygamy is legally forbidden, there are thinkers who had to admit its moral justification. The following statement made by a Christian Minister will be of thrilling interest. The Reverent Dr. Caleb R. Stetson, rector of Trinity, Episcopal Church says : (taken from The Bankruptcy of Marriage by V. G. Calverton p. 86.)

> " It is conceivable that this government might some day make polygamy legal, and that legalized polygamy has certain features which recommend it, as compared with the progressive polygamy and respectable promiscuity toward which we are now tending."

It must be clearly borne in mind that MUHAMMAD and the Faith of Islam did not introduce polygamy into the world. What MUHAMMAD and Islam did was to put a *check* upon it. Islam does by no means make it obligatory. Islam allows polygamy only under certain circumstances. Restrictions imposed by Islam are so stringent that it becomes absolutely impossible for an average Muslim to practise it. Polygamy under the restrictions laid down by Islam is on no account for self-indulgence. It is a heavy sacrifice which only the chosen few are called upon to make for the good of humanity. In Muslim countries polygamy is not commonly practised. Hardly one in a thousand has more than one wife.

According to the unanimous verdict of the friends and foes of his time, MUHAMMAD'S character was above the reproach of sensuality. He lived an exemplary life. In the prime of manhood, in the full bloom of his youth, when he was a young man of twenty-five, he married Khadija, a widow who was fifteen years older than he was. He lived with her an ideally happy life up to his fiftieth year when Khadija died. He contracted polygamous marriages during the last ten years of his life. During those concluding years, he had to fight against the whole of Arabia, led prayers in the Mosque five times a day and performed multifarious duties. The most of the little

leisure that was left, he devoted to prayers and contemplation of God. Besides, with one solitary exception, all his wives were widows. It indeed surpasses comprehension that the choice of a man who aimed at pleasure should fall on widows.

In short, the considerations which led MUHAMMAD to contract polygamous marriages were for other reasons than self-indulgence. Professsor Margoliouth who is perhaps the most relentless of all the modern critics of MUHAMMAD and Islam had to admit the truth of our above remarks. It is from an unwilling witness and as such we quote below :

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> " Several of his alliances were political in character, the Prophet being anxious to bind his chief followers more and more closely to himself. This was doubtless his object in marrying the daughters of Abu Bakr and Omar ; while a political motive of a different sort is to be found in his alliances with the daughters of political opponents of fallen enemies. Victory over an enemy would seem to have been consummated only when the enemy's daughter was introduced into the conqueror's harem. The remainder are to be explained by his extreme anxiety to have a son, and thereby escape a reproach to which he was keenly sensitive."

We do not fully agree with the learned Orientalist in all he has said about the plural marriages of MUHAMMAD. But he has admitted the central truth that self-indulgence was not the cause of the Prophet's marriages. It is beyond the scope of our small article to enter into a detailed discussion of the noble and humanitarian motives which compelled MUHAMMAD to enter polygamous life.

THE NEED FOR RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TRAINING

(BY MR. A. M. RAO)

At a recent youth meeting in Lahore resolutions were passed demanding in effect the abolition of all Communal Education, and many of the speakers denounced what they were pleased to call sectarianism. This attitude of mind is typical of a large section of present day youth, which is inclined to think secularism a smart and fashionable thing and to sneer at religion. The youths who demanded the abolition of what they were pleased to term Communal Educational institutions and the secularism of education generally probably thought that they were expressing very up-to-date and liberal views; but in fact the tendency of the best minds to-day is not away from but towards religion. It is increasingly being realised that a life without religious sanctions must inevitably degenerate, and that particulary in educating youth, the religious influence is very necessary. We have heard it claimed that religious education in schools could be replaced by non-sectarian moral training, such as could equally and at the same time be imparted to Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians; but it is very doubtful whether this kind of negative ethics with no religious sanction behind it can be of much use to any one. In life moral codes depend largely for their sanction on religion, and attempts to separate morals from religion have nowhere been successful. The first French Revolution abolished religion and God, and enthroned a Supreme Being—with Theroigue de Mericourt as his hierodule. The abolition led to the hideous excesses of the Red Terror and left a mark on France that has still to be removed. Similarly, in Russia, the revolution was accompanied by an attack on religion, which by the way is still persecuted

by the Soviet. The anti-religious character of the Soviet Government has led in Russia to the decay and break up of family life and the increase of immorality.

There are unfortunately in India young men who have been influenced by the ideals of the Soviet and who would like to abolish religion, not in schools and colleges, but altogether. This is the mentality not only of avowed Communists among our young men, but among many others who have no particular sympathy with the ideals of Marx on Bakunin, but are in general sympathy with revolutionary ideals. It is from this class of young men that the terrorists and anarchists spring. Terrorism and revolutionary crimes are largely the products of the Godless system of education which has long prevailed in India in Government Schools and in many private institutions. It is significant that the Muslims, who have in nearly all cases had the benefits of a religious education have not produced a single anarchist or terrorist—a fact to which tribute is paid by the recent Curfew Orders in Chittagong, the application of which is limited to Hindu young men. If young Muslims have in the past been free from revolutionary crime, it is in large measure due to the admirable religious and moral education they have had in the Islamia Schools and Colleges at which our boys are trained. It is these institutions that the so-called liberal-minded young men of Lahore want to abolish.

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It is not only however because a religious education is the best safeguard against the spread of Bolshevistic ideas that we insist on its importance. Proverbially, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and all true education must be founded on religion. It is all nonsense to talk of our Islamia Schools and Colleges as Communal institutions. There is nothing communal about teaching founded on religion. In England, the great public schools, and the older universities of Oxford and Cambridge are essentially

religious institutions. Every one of them has its own Church or Chapel attached, and some of these places of worship are noble examples of ecclesiastial architecture. The bulk of the public schools and the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge are attached to the Church of England; but the Roman Catholics have their seminaries at Beaumont and Stoneyhurst, and the non-conformists the great public schools of Leags, Kingswood and Millhill. In all these institutions, the education imparted has a definitely religious love and inspiration, and what is called the public school spirit is largely the product of this admirable system of religious education. Unfortunately for India, when Macaulay and his colleagues in Calcutta formed her Educational policy and started her first educational institutions they were inspired by the example of the newly started London University and its secular ideals. The Victorian age, during which our Indian Educational institutions were set up was essentially a secularist age, and thus Indian Education acquired a distinctly secular love. Muslims owe it to the great Sir Syed Ahmad Khan that in spite of this tendency of Indian educational policy generally, our great College and University of Aligarh which has been the model and example for the Islamia colleges and schools that have sprung up all over the country, was inspired by these same religious ideals which as we have seen are the inspiration of the best type of education in Europe. The founders of Aligarh believed, and the able educationists who conduct it to-day believe, that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and it is this essential policy that guides Aligarh, and that has resulted in giving to the alumni of that great institution a hall-mark of character hardly less valuable than that of the great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. On the model of Aligarh we have our Islamia Colleges all over India, where our youth are imparted religious education which alone leads to the formation of sound character and sound ideals. There is

nothing sectarian about these ideals. Just as youths of all races and all religions go to the great English public schools and colleges for their education, so Aligarh admits those of all races and creeds without any communal bar. Such an education, though based on the Islamic Religion, can not by any stretch of imagination be called communal and to try to abolish or even modify it would be to make the greatest of errors.

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Islam is the greatest world force because it is founded on the bond of Islamic brotherhood, and that ideal depends on the common culture and traditions of our race, which can best be presented at institutions of our own. It is important for our younger generation that they should be steeped in Islamic culture and tradition. The growth and development of communications is to-day bringing the different Muslim countries of the world very close to one another; and if the Indian Muslims are to preserve their identity with the other peoples of the Muslim world, it is most important that they should be trained in Islamic ideas. The language of the Qur'ān, Arabic, is an essential foundation for the religious education of our young men, while Persian, the language of our culture is equally important. These studies, and that of Islamic history can best flourish in the Islamic atmosphere of our own colleges. In the secular universities, they tend as we have recently seen, to be neglected, and relegated to an inferior position. There are great Islamic movements abroad, the new Muslim University at Jerusalem is one and the improvement and modernisation of the University of Al-Azhar in Cairo is another. In India we have the great Muslim University of Aligarh, and the Usmania University of Hyderabad, turning out every year young Muslim graduates whose learning is the more sound, the more sure because it is based on the fear of God, which as we said at the beginning of this article is the beginning of wisdom.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Fight for Divorce,—By Francis Gribble (Hurst and Blacket, Ltd.) 10*s.* 6*d.*

The conflict for and against Divorce is as old as the Christian era. It is a conflict between those who contend that there can be no remedy for matrimonial misfortunes except divorce, and those who reply that, in that case, there is no remedy for it at all, because divorce is a sin, expressly forbidden by Jesus and the Christian Church.

This book is an attempt to present the story of the conflict in a popular form. It traces the history of the doctrine that marriage is a sacrament and therefore indissoluble. It shows how the Church which first declared that doctrine played, and still plays, fast and loose with it. It examines the claims of Churches which have separated from that Church to speak with collective ecclesiastical authority and the claims of Bishops and other churchmen to represent that their own views are, and must be accepted as, the authorised teaching of the particular religious bodies in which they minister. It finally summarises the arguments in favour of divorce which the reformers base, not like the reactionaries, upon textual criticism, but upon their observation of human needs.

A good deal of space has been given, not only to the two Reports—Majority and Minority—which the Royal Commission issued in 1912, but also to an analysis of the voluminous evidence which the Commissioners had to weigh. That evidence is, perhaps, more interesting and more instructive than the Reports themselves. It brings into clear relief many points over which the Reports pass rather lightly. It gives particulars and tells stories illustrative of the terrible hardness of those hard cases

which the reformers are so anxious, and the reactionaries so reluctant, to remedy, and so helps any student of the subject to judge the applicability to this question of the ancient and familiar saying that "hard cases make bad law". The book presents, in concise form, the views expressed by such divorce-law reformers as Martin Luther, Archbishop Cranmer, John Milton, Jeremy Benthem and John Stuart Mill. What more than anything else that the book establishes is the fact that the law pertaining to divorce is not only entirely out of date but is responsible for much domestic unhappiness in Christian houses where husbands and wives happen to possess irreconcilably incompatible natures.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Gandhi's Fast

At the last Round Table Conference Mr. Gandhi warned the British Government that he would resist, even with his life, reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes in any shape or form as it would mean, he said, the disruption and vivisection of the Hindu community. From Yervada Jail (Poona) he wrote a long letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India in the second week of March in which he repeated his threat of 'fasting unto death' if seats in the councils in the future constitution were reserved for the Depressed Classes by separate electorates. The Secretary of State replied that it was yet too early to say anything about the representation of the Depressed Classes as the Lothian Committee was yet busy with its work. The Communal Award was announced by the Premier on 17th August according to which 71 seats were reserved by separate electorates for the Depressed Classes in all the provincal Councils with the additional right that they were entitled to vote in the general constituencies. On August 18th Mr. Gandhi wrote another long letter to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in which he announced his intention of "fasting unto death" if the right conferred on the Depressed Classes to send a few of their spokesmen to the councils by separate electorates was not at once retracted because Mr. Gandhi said the exercise of this right would disrupt the Hindu Community. Mr. MacDonald replied that he was sorry he could see no reason in Mr. Gandhi's threat nor was he prepared to deprive a people of their just rights because Mr. Gandhi did not want that those rights be exercised by them. Mr. MacDonald further said that the plea that the reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes would disrupt Hindu-Community evidently was based on flimsy grounds as the Depressed Classes would remain a part of the Hindu Community inasmuch as they would vote in, and their

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members would be entitled to stand from, the Hindu constituencies and that seats were reserved for the Depressed classes by separate electorates as there was no possibility of their being returned to the Councils in any other way. Mr. Gandhi translated his threat into fact. His fast began as announced on 20th September. Hindu leaders gathered at Bombay to come to an agreement with the leaders of the Depressed Classes to save Mr. Gandhi's life. The Poona Pact was signed after Mr. Gandhi had fasted for five days. According to it 148 seats have been reserved for the Depressed Classes by a system of election which is a mixture of joint and separate electorates. The British Government at once gave their assent to the Pact.

Mr. Gandhi's fast has lifted the veil from his mind as nothing else had done before. Even his admirers have been baffled by this act of his. He who claimed to live and work for India and who hoped to die for India and declared the struggle for Swaraj to be above all religious groups, made up his mind to die not because the interests of the Indian nation as such had received a set-back or that he found his dream of getting complete Home-Rule for India to be unrealizable in the near future, but because the reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes, he thought, would weaken *his own Hindu Community*. The late Maulana Muhammad Ali once said that he was a Muslim first and an Indian afterwards and he was condemned and branded by the entire Hindu Press as a reactionary and a rank communalist. What would they now say about their Mahatma who by his fast has shown himself to be a Hindu first and last, a Hindu from head to foot, from top to toe. Let our Muslim Nationalist friends who are bent upon divorcing religion from politics and want to see it thrown on the dung-heap, take a lessson from their political *guru, whose politics are derived from his religion*. Apart from the moral aspect of Mr. Gandhi's fast we are completely at a loss to understand one thing. Mr. Gandhi is non-co-operating with the Government. He declared in London and he had daclared many times before that the decisions of the British Government would not be binding upon him, the Congress or the future Swaraj Government. If at all

he is sincere and honest in his policy of non-co-operation and does not really believe the decisions of the British Government to be binding upon him, then why this fuss about the Government and why this determination to die if the Award had remained intact. And when the Congress under his leadership has boycotted the Councils and consistently with its announcements and declarations is bound to boycott the Councils that will come into being by the introduction of the New India Act, how would it manage to give the seats allotted to the Depressed Classes by the Poona Pact? Would the Congress in the same breath preach boycott of the Councils and reservation of a fixed number of seats for the Depressed Classes? Why should Mr. Gandhi so seriously take to heart the reservation of a few seats for a people who have been ground down to earth by the Hindu Community in Councils which he has always boycotted and which he looks upon as lengthening the chains of India's bondage as the result of an award of a Government whose decisions he has openly declared to be not binding upon him, passes our comprehension.

Is Religion Indispensable?

The essence of all religion is love of God and the service of mankind. The Prophet of Islam summed up Islam in the sentence تخلقوا باخلاق الله "develop in you the divine attributes." He is further reported to have said, "Religion is the love and worship of God and the service of His creatures." It has become, as it were, a fashion with those who take pride in calling themselves educated and cultured, to attempt to deny the use or necessity of religion altogether. They suggest and assert that man could be human, moral and develop the spiritual side of his character without having been obliged to submit to a fixed code of moral and spiritual laws or without even having to believe in a Being above and beyond him before Whom he is accountable for his deeds and actions. The very fact that all the moral and spiritual, even economic and social development that man has gone through during the ages has been entirely due to the efforts of men who claimed to be commissioned by

God and had brought with them a revealed code of moral and spiritual laws to teach and guide man to the surest and shortest way to achieve the goal and purpose of his existence and the fact that we never have yet had an atheistical society for any length of time which has held together and made progress on moral foundations—the Russian experiment being far too young for us to base safe conclusions upon her example—knocks the bottem from under this, seemingly feasible, but really untenable idea. Religious people have given innumerable incontestible proofs to show that there has never been and there can possibly be no progress worth the name in any of the multifarious phases of human life, without having to believe in a Supreme Being and without being guided by a code of divinely revealed moral and spiritual laws but we are tempted to reproduce from the *Sunrise* the substance of an argument given by Dr. E. D. Lucas. Principal of F. C. College, Lahore, in answer to the question, "Is religion indispensable", which though old, possesses an element of constant newness and never grows old by repetition. Dr. Lucas says:—

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> Jesus defined religion as love of God and love of man. To-day many would say that we must leave out the first and have only a religion of humanity. But one asks at once why, if there is no God, no moral law, no categorical imperative, nothing beyond and above man, then why should man love his fellows? The deeply religious have always thought of man with a background of cosmic significance—that the presence of man with his consciousness and conscience on this planet was of moment to the entire universe, that he was not a sport or chance production of blind forces working without purpose. What is to replace in man's mind this sense of his own worthfulness? If man's estimate of himself drops, that drop will carry with it probably all hopes for the future betterment of humanity. Why then should a man suffer for truth, for righteousness, for conscience sake? If there is no moral order, no cosmic tendency towards righteousness, no purposefulness in the universe, then men are only very intelligent animals and nothing more. The result will be sooner or later a loss of moral fibre, a degeneration in the very vitals of society, which will lead to chaos and ruin. .....However, the basic reason for belief in religion is because of the evil which I see in the world about me. This may seem to be a strange way of putting the case, but I think it is true one. Evil is as yet

regnant in the world and the more sensitive men and women are in moral fibre, the more they are repelled by things as they are. But instead of giving up the struggle, thousands of such men and women dedicate themselves to the accomplishment of what they conceive to be God's will. Once abolish all ideas of God in human society and all reference of our conduct to Him, and the vital nerve of the world's best living would be cut asunder and there would be a consequent collapse of morality and civilization such as has seldom been witnessed. Whenever an ancient religion has died, leaving nothing in its place but scepticism, cynicism and the consequent despair of a better world, then civilization itself has disappeared in the general collapse.

Secret of the Strength of Islam

The whole of Islam is summarised in the *Kalimah* of Islam: 'There is none worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God.' This *Kalimah* is not an empty formula which is used only by a new convert when he is initiated into Islam. It is the pith and kernel of the whole teachings of Islam. In a proper appreciation of its implications lies the power and strength of Islam. In the Qurān on no subject greater stress has been laid than on the doctrine of the unity and oneness of God and nothing excites, so it appears from the Quran, so much the wrath of God as to associate anything animate or inanimate, as an equal with Him. And Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, is the visible bond which keeps together the scattered pearls of the Islam's beautiful necklace. He is the central pillar on which the vast edifice of Islam stands. He is the bond of union among the different Muslim nations. From his childhood a Muslim is reared and nurtured on the idea that he is to love, obey and fear no one in opposition to the One Supreme Being Who is the possessor of every conceivable good attribute and is completely free from all defects. The inculcation of this belief engenders in him fearlessness, self-respect, self-confidence and a supreme contempt and disregard for the petty worldly considerations when he is called upon to serve a higher and nobler cause. In the Muslims' belief in the oneness of God and in their extreme love and veneration for their Exalted Prophet lies the secret of the

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power of Islam and of the strength of the Muslim people. It is not for nothing that in the Muslim *Azan* which is announced five times daily from the lofty minarets of mosques in all Muslim towns throughout the world and in the prayers which are said five times every day the greatest emphasis has been laid on the Unity of God and on the Holy Prophet as being the Muslims' infallible guide. Those who have endeavoured to discover the causes of the inexhaustible reserves of the vitality of Islam have been compelled to recognise that it is due to the above belief. Mr. W. Wilson Cash who has made an intensive study of Islamic institutions and of the causes that have contributed to the wonderfully rapid spread of Islam in a very short time to the remotest corners of the world and have saved it from disintegration and disruption in his book "The Expansion of Islam" writes on this question:

> "The strength of Islam lies not in its social and political systems, both of which have frequently broken down and have been altered and changed in different ages to suit the needs of the time, but it lies in the fact that Islam is a religion which has enabled men, by a simple scheme of theology, to live religious lives. No religion could maintain its hold upon millions of people, as Islam does, were it not able to meet some human needs. Islam in proclaiming the unity and greatness of God was putting forth an idea that grew in the minds of men into a profound conviction. The simplicity of it appealed to them as an immense relief from the complexity of mediæval Christian teaching with its priestly offices, saint worship and its labyrinth of theological difficulties; it won its way in polytheistic lands, such as Africa, by its very insistence that there is but one God. Moslems have never tired of reiterating that God is one, God is great and He is a God of judgment. These truths are not peculiar to Islam, for a Christian can subscribe to them all, but they represent the essence of all Moslem teaching about God. Much in Moslem theology is purely theoretical and its interest is confined to students of Koranic law, but the thought of God as the one governor of the universe, as a personal force in the lives of men, and as one who has direct individual dealings with them, is a fact of life, not a theory. It provides an explanation for many of the problems of life, and those who grasp its significance it enables to face loss, suffering, trouble and adversity with complete resignation.... It is in the study of this aspect of Islam that we begin to understand why Islam not only made converts but held them, why in days when there was no compulsion or pressure Moslems

spread their faith and won people from many races, of differing religions and of widely varying outlooks. They sought to make the unity of God a reality in the experience of men. They met Christianity at a time when men were dominated by a priestcraft which appeared to many to deny the right of direct access to God. If a man were burdened with sins he had to repair to a priest for absolution. Islam came preaching that God was accessible to all. He required no saintly intercessors, and the humblest might approach Him and seek His mercy.

"In trying to sum up the reasons for the expansion of Islam I would place next in order the devotion and loyalty to the Prophet universally shown by Moslems of every race. . . . When Ayesha was asked about the Prophet she said:

> He was a man just such as yourselves. He laughed often and smiled much. He would mend his clothes and cobble his shoes. He used to help me in my household duties, but what he did oftenest was to sew. He never took revenge excepting where the honour of God was concerned. When angry with any person he would say, 'What hath taken such a man that he should soil his forehead in the mud?'

"This is the picture of a very human man who by his personality won the affection of the Arabs. Armies advanced to battle under the inspiration of a man who had taught them a great truth about God, who had been prepared to suffer persecution for his faith, and who as one of themselves understood their needs, aspirations and hopes.

"It naturally follows from what has been said that another source of strength in Mohammedanism is the Moslem's pride in his religion. We have seen what this means in pagan African areas where the prayer mat ostentatiously displayed gives the Moslem the opportunity of public worship which at the same time is an object lesson to the onlookers. This is not done from any desire for display or "to be seen by men", but from an entire absence of self-consciousness in prayer and a pride of faith which makes a man never ashamed to own and confess it even when he knows that those watching him are not believers. Enthusiasm is always infectious, and the Christian world met in Islam a body of people wildly enthusiastic for their religion. The ringing note of reality that must have met Christian populations weakened by schism, inert through ignorance and priestly rule, and often exploited by the wealthy few was a challenge to the Church. The struggle between the two faiths was one of vitality, and in pre-Reformation days Islam won practically every time because it stood for personal religion, which was the heritage of all."

Education of the Child

The problem of child education is one of the most important social problems that deeply affect the growth and development of a community or a nation. The child is the father of man. No community which does not wish to lose its separate identity and its culture can afford to ignore to seriously consider the question of the education of the future builders and architects of its destiny. Dr. Maria Montessori is known all over the world as the introducer of a system of child education. She has contributed an able article on this subject in the *Prabuddha Bharata*. We take the following excerpt from that article. We may or may not quite agree with all that Dr. Montessori observes, but her views being the views of a specialist deserve to be seriously considered. She says :

> Here we have the great question of humanity and of education : *the child's work* and *the reciprocal relations between adult and child*. The child is growing into a man through his own efforts and the power of growth within himself : such intimate aid it is not in our power to give. We are producers of things in the outer world, and it is only these things that we can furnish as aids. But this child who is creating the man to be, is creating independently of us in a world of his own. The important matter is that he should be allowed full opportunity for complete development, that he may create a man who is strong, well-balanced. Our task is to enable the child to live.
>
> The guiding impulse is seen to be different in the work done by the child and that done by the man. The child is active that he may grow ; the adult, that he may produce. When we try to fit the child into our adult world, to force and squeeze him according to ideals we have formed of what his correct behaviour should be in order to give us the least amount of trouble, we are deceiving ourselves into believing we are doing our best for him while actually we are distorting his development.
>
> The work of the child is not guided by the intention to reach some external aim, its end and aim is action, to act, to continue to act as long as the innerself needs, to satisfy its need of growth. So the external object is for the child merely a means, never an end. We have here a clear, well-defined, undeniable characteristic of the child's work.

The child must do all his work by himself. Here we have another truth. Who could ever help another to grow? Supposing growth to be fatiguing, who could lessen and relieve another's fatigue, by co-operation?

Only if the adult sets obstacles does the child fight and defend himself. Almost all the sufferings of the child are due to this strife against the adult who has not understood him. The child works alone towards his own development, he does not stand in need of association or division of labour.

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Thus the necessary law of external discipline which reigns in the field of adult production, has no part in the work of the child, for here there reigns another kind of discipline which is revealed to us through spontaneous actions of the loftiest kind when the child has been placed in an environment favourable to his development.

*NOTES ON THE HOLY QURAN

Sura-tul-Fatihah—IV

10. (*a*) انعمت *an'amta* is derived from انعام (blessings) which, though applicable to all the favours of God, has, in the Holy Qurān, been particularly used to signify the favour of divine revelation, as may be seen from the following verses:—

1. ان هوالا عبد انعمنا عليه (زخرف ع-٦) "He (Jesus) was but a man on whom We conferred our blessings" (XL, 50).

2. يعيسى ابن مريم اذكر نعمتى عليك وعلى والدتك اذ ايدتك بروح القدس (مائدہ-ع٥) "O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favour upon thee and upon thy mother; remember when I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit" (V, 111).

ومن يطع الله والرسول فاولئك مع الذين انعم الله عليهم من النبيين والصديقين والشهداء والصالحين وحسن اولئك رفيقا (النساء ع ٩).

"And who so shall obey Allah and the Messenger shall be in company with those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, and the Righteous, the Martyrs, the virtuous, and these are excellent companions." (IV, 70).

This verse also refers to the blessing of divine revelation including prophethood.

(*b*) *Excepting those on whom Thy wrath has descended*

* Under this heading will continue to appear regularly in every issue of the *Review of Religions* explanatory notes on the Holy Quran. These "notes" will comprise translation and detailed and comprehensive explanation of the Quranic verses, beginning with Sura tul-Fatiha and will be written by the famous writer and theologian, Maulana Sher Ali, B. A., aided and helped by the *dars* of the Quran which the persent Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud Din Mahmud Ahmad, has been giving from time to time at Qadian. In this way, we hope, by the grace of God, to bring out, in due course, a complete and exhaustive commentary of the Quran.—*Ed. R. R.*

and those who have gone astray. These words have been used to qualify the words الذين انعمت عليهم "those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings." Thus a Muslim is taught to pray that God may make him of such favoured ones as never incur the displeasure of God or go astray from the right path after becoming recipients of divine blessings; for it sometimes happens that even after a man has become the recipient of divine favours, he brings down upon himself the anger of God on account of some mistake of his, or instead of loving God, he begins to cherish love for something else and consequently falls away from Him. According to the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him!), the Jews are the typical examples of "those on whom has descended the wrath of God" after they had enjoyed His favours, and the Christians supply a striking illustration of "those who have gone astray". Tirmadhi and Musnad Imam Ahmad Hanbal record the following tradition:—

قال ان المغضوب عليهم هم اليهود والضالين هم النصارى۔

"The Holy Prophet said, 'Those, on whom God's wrath has descended are the Jews, while those who have gone astray are the Christians".' The Jews upon whom God showered His favours in abundance incurred His wrath by their persistent transgressions, particularly against Jesus Christ, while the Christians have gone astray by forsaking the teachings of Jesus and rejecting the Holy Prophet of Islam, about whose advent there are several prophecies in their scriptures.

(*d*) The last verse of this chapter embodies a mighty prophecy and, therefore, deserves our special attention. It is made incumbent on each Muslim to pray to God to save him from becoming a Jew and a Christian and not from becoming one who sets up equals to God, although this verse was at first revealed at Mecca and the bitterest enemies of Islam in Mecca were idol-worshippers, and Jews and Christians had not yet stood in the way of Islam.

Had the Quran been the word of man, it would have, in the first place, taught a prayer for safety against nothing but idol-worship, or, at least idol-worshippers would have been spoken of first of all. But, on the contrary, only Jews and Christians are mentioned which clearly points to the fact that idol-worshippers would be entirely swept out of Arabia and that the Muslims would be absolutely freed from the fear of joining their ranks. But, at the same time, the verse implies a promise for the advent of a Messiah, for whose rejection the Muslims are threatened to be reckoned among the Jews and whose advent was to be preceded by the ascendancy of the Christian religion. Hence it is that the prayer taught in this verse refers only to Jews and Christians. This prophecy about the utter extinction of the idol-worshippers from Arabia and the coming danger of the Muslims turning Jews (on account of the rejection of the Messiah) and Christians is enough to convince a right-thinking man of the truth of Islam. The Messiah referred to in this verse has already appeared in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (Punjab, India).

(*e*) The Holy Prophet said, إذا قرء الفاتحة فقولوا آمين يجبكم الله "When the Imam who leads the prayer finishes reciting the F'ātiḥah, say. *Amen* (*i.e.* Answer thou my prayer, O Lord), then God will answer you." (Muslim and Abū Dá'ūd). In Bukhári we read that when the Imam says *Amen*, the angels also do the same, and whoever says *Amen* exactly at the time when angels say it, all his past sins are forgiven. This means that we should say *Amen* when the Imam says it, for we do not know exactly when the angels say *Amen*.

11. The Surah reveals a beautiful order in the arrangement of its words and sentences. It is divided as the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him !) said, into two halves. The first half pertains to God, and the second half to man, and the different parts of each portion correspond to one another in the most

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remarkable manner. Corresponding to the name Allah, the possessor of all the highest attributes in their perfection, in the first half, we have the words "Thee alone do we worship" in the second half. As soon as the devotee thinks God to be the possessor of all perfect attributes and free from all defects, the cry of "Thee alone do we worship" rises from the depths of his heart.

Again, corresponding to the attribute *Rabbul-'Alamin* (the Creator, Developer and Sustainer of the worlds) in the first part we have the words, "Thee alone do we beg for help." When a Muslim knows God to be the Creator and Preserver and the source of all development, he at once takes shelter in Him, saying, "Thee alone do we beg for help."

Again, corresponding to the attribute *Ar-Rahmán* (the Beneficent, the Giver of innumerable blessings without our asking for them, and the Provider of all our needs gratuitously) in the first part, we have the words "Guide Thou us on the right path," in the second part; for the highest of the blessings which God provides for man gratuitously is guidance which He provides for him by sending revelation through His messengers.

Again, corresponding to the attribute *Ar-Rahim* (the Merciful, the Giver of the best reward for work) in the first part, we have the words "The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings" in the second part, for it is *Ar-Rahim* Who bestows blessings on His favoured servants.

Corresponding to *Málik-i-Yaumid-dín* (the Master of Day of Retribution), in the first half, we have the concluding part of the last verse in the second half, *viz*, "Excepting those on whom Thy wrath has descended, and those who have gone astray." When man comes to think of giving an account of his deeds, he begins to dread failure, so

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pondering over the attribute of 'the Master of the Day of Retribution', man, through fear, begins to pray to God to be saved from His wrath and from going astray from the right path.

12. *Question.*—Why are men not required only to pray in their minds? Why is it that injunctions have been given requiring the limbs and other parts of the body to play a part in the worship?

Answer.—Both body and soul make man, and body affects the soul. So one reason for giving such injunctions is that when the limbs and other parts of the body engage in divine service, the mind will also naturally turn to God.

Another reason is that both body and soul have been created by God, and both equally benefit by the working of divine attributes. Hence in order to make worship complete, it is necessary that both should share in it, otherwise it will not be complete.

13. This short chapter is called *Fātiḥah* and it is curious to note that this very name occurs in a prophecy in the Revelation, Chapter 10, which also contains a reference to the number of verses in this chapter. The name occurs in the second verse of the aforesaid chapter of the Revelation, where it is translated as *open*. The Hebrew word is *Fatoah* which is the same as *Fātiḥah*. The seven thunders in the prophecy represent the seven verses of this chapter. The Christian writers agree in holding that the prophecy refers to the second advent of Jesus and they are right in their opinion. The little book *Fatoah* or *Fātiḥah* was constantly in the hands of the Promised Messiah, who wrote many commenatries on this chapter, both in Arabic and Urdu, deduced arguments of his truth from its contents, often referred to it in his speeches and writings and constantly used it as his model prayer and exhorted his

followers also to do the same. He showed such pearls of divine wisdom and prophecy to be imbedded in the short verses of this pithy chapter as had never been dreamt of before, so much so that one might say with truth that the chapter had remained up to his days a sealed book, as a voice from heaven said to the prophet, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

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14. A close and careful reflection over the individual verses of this chapter and their arrangement brings home the fact that this chapter contains a guidance for man to his final goal of union with God, carrying him step by step through various stages of spiritual development.

There are only two potent motives which prompt submission to, or worship of, a being, *viz.*, love and fear, the former being always prompted by beauty and beneficence. So, God has in this chapter appealed to both of these incentives. Some people are moved by a feeling of love, while there are others who, devoid of all the softer sentiments of love, are swayed by fear. But the wisest course is to appeal first to the tender instincts of love, and failing that, to have resort to the feeling of fear; so, quite consistently with human nature, the opening verses of the chapter make mention of such attributes of God as bring His beauty and goodness to the forefront and thereby inspire man with an overwhelming sense of love for Him. His name is Allah, the sole possessor of all perfect attributes and totally free from all defects. He is *Rabbul-'ālamín*, *i.e.*, the Creator and the Sustainer and Supporter of all. He is *Ar-Rahmàn* who maintains the believer as well as the unbeliever and who has brought into existence all those necessaries of our life with which we are not even familiar, but without which it is impossible for us to live. He is *Ar-Rahim i.e.* He rewards our good deeds in the

most suitable and best manner. When those who are capable of being moved by feelings of love think over these attributes of God, they at once burst into the humble invocation :— ایاک نعبد "Thee alone do we worship". But, on the other hand, those who are dead to all sense of love and are moved only by a sense of fear have their attention drawn to مالک یوم الدین "Master of the Day of Retribution," and realize the awful fact that their deeds are to meet with sure retribution from God and that they will have to appear before Him one day to render an account of their doings. This thought compels them to prostrate themselves before God in humble submission, uttering "Thee alone do we worship". In short, the first portion of the chapter has elements to appeal to minds which, dominated either by love or by fear, come to utter the natural cry of the human soul, "Thee alone do we worship". But at this stage, when, on the one hand, the worshipper sees his own weakness and, on the other, faces the winning charms of the Divine Beloved or stands in awe of His Majesty, he irresistably breaks forth into the cry ایاک نستعین "Thee alone we beg for help," meaning that "we worship and obey Thee alone, but we fall short of the full measure of worship, and hence implore help from Thee to attain to the fulness of worship."

When love reaches this sublime stage and a sense of the glory of God thus consumes all lower passions, human nature of itself bursts into the prayer, اهدنا لصراط المستقیم "Guide Thou us on the right path." The right path is always the shortest way. So the above prayer points to the height of love. It shows that the supplicant cannot bear to remain long away from God and, therefore, prays for the shortest path free from zig-zag curves and leading him to God in the shortest possible time. Again those who have access to the royal court may either be ordinary courtiers or the chosen confidants of

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the king. So the further desire of the human heart is thus expressed in the next verse صراط الذين انعمت عليهم *i.e.*, "O Lord, show us the right path, but along with it, do us the further favour of showing us the path of those who enjoyed Thy favour and blessings In other words our entry into Thy presence may not be like that of ordinary men, but on the other hand, we may be reckoned among Thy dear ones and may combine in ourselves the character of the lover and the beloved and Thou might begin to reciprocate our love (for it is the favoured ones of God that are dear to Him and only those who are deserving of nothing but the favours of God deserve His special love)." Thus, man longs for that high stage of love which is free from every tinge of estrangement. At this stage, every man attains to perfection and the lover and the beloved become united with each other. But as the faith of a Muslim lies half way between hope and fear, so on reaching this stage one desires constancy in it. This natural desire of man found voice in the prayer that he might not be separated from God after attaining to union with Him. Further, as separation proceeds from two abvious causes, *viz*, the displeasure of the beloved, and faithlessness on the part of the lover, therefore, to guard against both these contingencies, the prayer is supplemented by the words, غير المغضوب عليهم *i.e.* "May it not happen that Thou shouldst get angry with us owing to any mistake on our part," and again, ولا الضالين *i.e.* May it not happen that on reaching the destination our hearts should begin to cherish love for something else and we should in consequence fall away from Thee." Thus the chapter furnishes a complete and comprehensive prayer which God, out of His mercy, has taught to man, and the like of which can never be produced by any other faith of the world. Consider how it is a complete picture of the human nature and how all the desires and hankerings of the human soul find full expression in one short prayer.

Suratul-Baqarah—I

(*Revealed at Medina*).

Rukū' I

15. Sūratul Baqarah was revealed at Medina, the greater part of it having been revealed in the first year of Hegira. Like the rest of the Sūrahs of the Holy Quran, this Sūrah was also given its name by the Holy Prophet himself, as may be seen from the following saying of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) recorded in *Saḥīh Muslim*:—

"Make not your houses graveyards,* Surely the devil flees from the house wherein Sūratul Baqarah is recited."

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

1. *Bismillā-hir-Raḥmā-nir-Raḥim.*

1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.[16]

16. See Note on *Bismillah* in *Súratul-Fātiḥah*. Not only the verb اقرء (I begin) but also استعين (I seek help) may be taken as understood before the words. "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful". When a reader of the Holy Qur'ān utters the words *'Bismillā-hir-Raḥmān-nir-Raḥīm*, he, as it were, says: —

'O Allah, I appeal to thee in Thy name, and beseech Thee to deal with me in a way which behoves Thy name Allah, and in a manner which becomes Thy attributes *Ar-Raḥmān* (the Beneficent) and *Ar-Raḥīm* (the Merciful).

الم

2. *Alif Lām-Mīm.*

2. Alif Lām-Mīm.[17]

* This means that the houses in which the Word of God is not recited and God is not worshipped are not houses but graveyards, their inmates being dead, not living.

17. The letters of the alphabet which occur in the beginning of certain Sūrahs are called the *Muqatta'āt*. Some writers do not try to construe these letters, and think them to be meaningless. The only purpose which these letters, according to them, are meant to serve is to draw the attention of the disbelievers to the fact that the word of God is also composed of the letters of which the word of man is composed, and if this book is the word of Muhammad (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) and not the word of God, let them produce a book like it, and that if in spite of the fact that this book is made up of the very letters of which the words of man are made, they fail to produce a book like the Holy Qur'ān, it will be proof conclusive of the fact that it is beyond the power of man, and that it is the word of Him whose words and whose works are both incomparable.

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Some commentators are of the opinion that these letters are the names of the Sūrahs before which they occur. Thus Chapter XLI which begins with the letters *Ḥā Mīm* was given that name by the Holy Prophet himself. This view, however, is exposed to the objection that if these letters had been the titles of the Sūrahs, they ought to have been put before every Sūrah, but we find that every Sūrah does not commence with such letters.

Some think them to be the names of the Holy Qur'ān, while others hold that the numerical value of these letters indicates the dates of certain important events that were to come to pass in times to come. It is on record that a person calculating by means of these letters, drew certain inferences in the presence of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) and the Holy Prophet did not contradict him. This incident also shows that these letters were construed and attempts were made to interpret them in the days of the Holy Companions and in the presence of the Holy Prophet.

Some authorities are of the opinion that these letters were the vehicles of secret communication between God and his Holy Prophet.

But the majority of leading commentators hold the view that these letters must be construed like other parts of the Holy Qurān, for with regard to the whole of the Holy Qurān, God says : " And truly, it is an admonition to Thee and to Thy people ! " (XLIII, 45). Hence they refuse to admit that there is anything in the Holy Quran which is beyond human comprehension. In fact the Holy Qurān was not the first book to make use of these letters, for among the Arabs also it was a practice to use letters which stood for words. For instance, a pre-Islamic poet says :—

قلت لها قفی فقالت قاف

" I said to her, ' Stand ' and she said ' Qaf '. Here the letter قاف *Qaf*-(*q*) stands for the verb *Waqaftu* which means ' I stand'. Instead of using the full form of the verb, the poet simply takes one letter out of the verb and makes it stand for the whole. Similarly, another poet says :—

بالخیر خیرات وان شرفا ولا ارید الشر الا ان تا

" In return for goodness on your part, I will do many goodnesses, but if there is evil on your part, then (there will be evil on my part also), and I do not desire to do evil unless you desire it." In these lines the letter (fa) فا has been used instead of فشر (*fa sharrun*) " then (there will be) evil (on my part also) " *i.e.*, only the first letter فا (fa) has been used for فشر (fa sharrun). Similarly, the letter تا (ta) has been used for *tashtau* (you desire).

Hence, when single letters were used as abbreviations in pre-Islamic literature also, there is no reason why we should regard similar letters in the Holy Qur'ān as meaningless and pass over them as such. These letters

must have a meaning and we should try to find out what that meaning is.

The fact is that those who accept the truth are of three classes, (1) the common people, (2) the middle class men who are in the habit of pondering and reflecting over matters, and (3) the chosen ones who are worthy of having access to the secrets of God. And the Holy Qur'ān contains matter of three kinds, by which every one can benefit according to his ability, and as it is open to every individual to pass through all the stages, we cannot say that the whole of the Holy Qur'ān is not meant for all. These letters also belong to the category of divine secrets, the significance of which was disclosed to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) and which is also disclosed to others through him.

Those scholars who have pondered over these letters and studied them in the light of the subject matter of the Sūrahs before which they occur, have also construed them and the interpretation which they have put on them is also correct. They have, after deep study, come to the conclusion that they are abbreviations of the names and attributes of God, or of words expressive of His actions.

As for the letters الٓمٓ (alif, lām and mim) occurring in the beginning of this chapter, Hazrat Abdullah bin 'Abbās has interpreted them as standing for انا الله اعلم "I (the revealer of this book) Am Allah, the Most Knowing", *i.e.* الف standing for انا signifying 'I am' ; لام stands for الله (Allah) ; and ميم stands for اعلم 'The Most Knowing'. The sentence انا الله اعلم particularly refers to the divine attribute of knowledge, an attribute which has a special bearing on the subject matter of this chapter.

Golius says, as we learn from Sale, that these letters were added by the scribes and signify انا الله محمد *i.e.*, "at

the command of Muhammad ". But this ingenious interpretation is evidently wrong and absolutely unfounded. The evidence of history is quite clear on this point. Whenever the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) happened to read this chapter, he read الم along with it. Had these letters been a later addition of the scribes, the Holy Prophet, while reading this chapter, would have omitted them.

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An authentic tradition recorded in Tirmadhi, Bukhari's History and Hākim states that the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) said that الم was not one word, but that الف was a word, لام was a word, and ميم was a word. This testimony amply bears out the fact that the letters الم are part and parcel of the Holy Qur'ān, and not a later addition of the amanuenses, as Golius supposes.

Another Christian writer advances the theory that these letters occurring in the beginning of the Sūrahs are the initial letters of the names of the Holy Companions who assited the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) in composing the Holy Qur'ān, and by way of illustration he adds that the ها in كهيعص stands for ابو هريرة (Abu Huraira). The falsity of this queer theory becomes apparent from the fact that Abū Huraira embraced Islam long after the Sūrah beginning with the letters كهيعص was revealed.

ذلك الكتب لاريب فيه هدى للمتقين

3. *Dhāli-kal-kitābu lā raiba fī-hi hudal-lil-muttaqīn*

3. This book wherein is no doubt is a guidance for the God-fearing.

Note 18 (*a*) ذالك (Dhālika) literally means 'that', but has, in the translation, been rendered 'this'. The reason for the departure is that *dhālika* does not here indicate any

idea of remoteness, but, according to the accepted usage of the Arabic language, it points to the sublime dignity of the Holy Qur'ān. Thus, apart from any idea of distance, *dhālika* signifies that this book is pre-eminently above human ingenuity and enjoys unqualified superiority over all other books of the world. In the absence of a word or phrase in the English language, which may exactly bring out this sense, *dhālika* has been rendered 'this', because it does not refer here to any distant object. Palmer is quite mistaken in saying that, according to Muslim belief, the angel Gabriel showed to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) from afar the Holy Book which was in heaven, and consequently instead of 'this book', 'that book' was the proper wording. This explanation is entirely unwarranted. In fact, the word *dhālika* occurs in the Holy Book in the sense of 'this', as explained above, quite a number of times (*vide* L, 20; LXXIX, 27).

(*b*) In accordance with the usage of the Arabic language, this verse is capable of a variety of interpretations:

First, "This book is a guidance for the God-fearing. There is no doubt about it."

Secondly, "It is a perfet book. This admits of no doubt." The sentence زيدالعادل means "Zaid is the only one who is perfect in all the different aspects of justice." Similarly, ذالك الكتاب also means "This is the only book which embodies all the requirements of guidance."

Thirdly, "It is that book, there is no doubt about it." This meaning refers to the claim of the Holy Qur'ān to be the very book which was promised through Moses (*vide* DEUT. XVIII. 18. 19).

(*c*) لاريب فيه (*Lā raiba fī-hi*) need not be construed as "Nobody will ever entertain any doubt about it", for the

Holy Qur'ān itself refers to certain objections raised against it (*vide* verse 24). But its simple import is that "This book carries with it so many arguments that a right-thinking mind cannot but accept it as a guide, a perfect book, or the promised book."

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In his commentary, the Rev. E. M. Wherry says on the authority of an Indian co-religionist of his that the frequent repetition of the statement, "There is no doubt about it" on the part of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !), in itself creates a doubt about the truth of the Holy Qur'ān, because, according to him, it is a guilty conscience that expects an accusation of falsehood. But this view has arisen from a poor grasp of human nature and world's history. It is human nature and history bears witness to it that men at first reject teachings contrary to their own religion, customs and traditions, and accuse the Teacher of falsehood and imposture. We know of no Prophet who was accepted without any opposition. So, it is quite natural that the Holy Qur'ān should drive home the point at the very outset that this Book permits of no doubt as a guide.

Although the Rev. gentleman looks upon the Bible as free from such forms of speech, yet, in fact, we do find in the Bible such expressions at diverse places; as for instance :—(1) "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing forward or perverse in them". (Proverbs VIII, 8). (2) "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth ; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. I, the Lord, speak righteousness. I declare things that are right" (Isaiah, XLV, 19). See also Titus, III, 8 ; I Timothy IV, 9 ; Revelation XXII, 6 ; etc.

(*d*) The word *Muttaqi* متقی (God-fearing) is derived from the root اتقاء *Ittiqà*, which means "To preserve oneself, to make anything the means of one's protection". Hence *Muttaqī* means "One who preserves himself from sin

The Ahmadiyya Movement

THE Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mehdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets he came to serve and reinterpret the final and eternal teachings laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the true and real Islam and seeks to uplift humanity and establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, under whose direction the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them :—

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